

# **Provincial Wellness Advisory Council**

## **Activity Plan**

**April 1, 2011-March 31, 2014**

## Chairperson's Message



In accordance with the *Transparency and Accountability Act*, I am pleased to present the 2011-2014 Activity Plan for the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council. The Advisory Council has recently been included under the *Transparency and Accountability Act* as a Category 3 entity and is expected to plan and report in keeping with these requirements. This enables the Advisory Council to achieve its guiding principle of increased accountability to the public.

In the development of this three year activity plan, consideration was given to the Provincial Government's strategic directions, the mandate of the Council and its activities to date. The Government's strategic directions and focus areas, which are relevant to the Advisory Council, have been identified. The activities, objectives and indicators in this plan represent the Advisory Council's continued efforts to support health & wellness in the province and to build on the Provincial Wellness Plan (2006-2008).

As Chairperson, I acknowledge that the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council is accountable for the preparation of this 2011-2014 activity plan and achievement of the goals and objectives contained in this document. The contribution of Advisory Council members, and the organizations and Departments they represent, in achieving the Department of Health and Community Services' vision is also recognized.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Catherine Donovan".

Catherine Donovan, MD.  
Chairperson, Provincial Wellness Advisory Council

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## 2. OVERVIEW

In 2001 the Provincial Government recognized the importance of maintaining a healthy population and The Provincial Wellness Advisory Council (PWAC) was established. This reflected Government's commitment to integrate aspects of wellness into a broader health promotion and disease prevention program across all age groups. This required the coordination of policies, funding, and action across provincial government departments. To assist with this, the PWAC identified six priority areas: 1) healthy living 2) healthy environments 3) mental health promotion 4) injury prevention 5) child and youth development and 6) health protection.

In 2003-04, the PWAC prepared a framework document, ***Recommendations for a Provincial Wellness Strategy***, and three supporting wellness papers on Healthy Living, Healthy Environments and Mental Health Promotion. These were presented to the Department for consideration in ongoing and future wellness initiatives. Between 2003-2005, the focus was on improving the capacity of communities to support health and well-being and to promote individual and family healthy lifestyle choices. To help achieve these priorities, the Department supported and facilitated the transition from Regional Heart Health Coalitions to the establishment of Regional Wellness Coalitions in each health region.

Taking direction from the above recommendations and building on existing initiatives and resources, the Department of Health & Community Services produced ***Achieving Health and Wellness: Provincial Wellness Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador (Phase 1: 2006 – 2008)***. The Provincial Wellness Advisory Council continued to share its expertise and provide advice and guidance to the Minister of Health and Community Services on the continued development and implementation of the Provincial Wellness Plan. Two new wellness papers, Healthy Child Development (0 – 6 years) (2007) and Injury Prevention (2007) were developed and the Mental Health Promotion (2007) and Environment (2010) paper were revised. These papers were presented to the Minister and the Advisory Council looks forward to advancing its work over the next 3 years in all wellness areas.

## Mandate

The Provincial Wellness Advisory Council exists to provide advice and guidance to the Minister of Health and Community Services on the development and implementation of the Provincial Wellness Plan.

The role of the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council is to:

- expand and define the components of the wellness plan,
- identify gaps and priorities based on evidence and research,
- recommend action strategies,
- monitor the achievements of the wellness plan, and
- provide ongoing leadership for wellness.

The Provincial Wellness Advisory Council's work is based on five key directions:

- 1) strengthen partnerships and collaboration,
- 2) develop and expand wellness initiatives,
- 3) increase public awareness,
- 4) enhance capacity for health promotion, and
- 5) evaluate and monitor progress.

## Wellness Priorities

Many of the wellness priorities are linked to one another. For example, issues related to tobacco control link with healthy living (healthy eating and physical activity); with mental health promotion in terms of coping strategies and with environmental health as it relates to environmental tobacco smoke. A comprehensive approach involves numerous sectors and ensures that the wellness priorities are considered from various perspectives and are not looked at in isolation. The Council's work addresses the following wellness priorities:

### Healthy Eating: Improving healthy eating practices

Healthy eating is essential for good health. However, eating a well-balanced and nutritious diet can be a challenge. To make it easier to eat healthy, we need to focus efforts on increasing access to an adequate and nutritious food supply, making nutritious food affordable, and enhancing knowledge and skills so that we can choose and prepare nutritious food choices.

### Physical Activity: Increasing the number of people who are physically active

Being physically active is an important part of living healthy. While it is important for everyone to be active, there are factors which limit ability to be physically active. Efforts to improve physical activity levels and reduce physical inactivity

must aim to increase opportunities to become active and reduce the barriers that keep us from being physically active.

### **Injury Prevention: Reducing injury rates**

Many think that injuries are the result of 'accidents' that cannot be avoided. In actual fact, injuries are predictable and preventable. The majority of injuries in this province are a result of falls, motor vehicle crashes, suffocation, poisonings, fires, and pedestrian and water related incidents. It is time to learn more about the causes and to increase efforts to reduce injuries. Intentional injuries (violence, homicide, suicide) and injuries as a result of a workplace or occupational event are outside the scope of the Provincial Wellness Plan.

### **Mental Health Promotion: Strengthening positive mental health**

Mental health is inter-related with social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Mental health provides individuals with the vitality necessary for active living, to achieve goals and to interact with one another in ways that are respectful and just. To maintain good mental health, we must continue to create support systems in communities, develop positive problem solving and coping skills, build strong self-esteem and develop the capacity to use the resources available to us in communities.

### **Child and Youth Development: Enhancing the health of children and youth**

Infant and early childhood experiences influence health throughout life. Investments and initiatives, that support health and well-being from infancy through the teenage years, include such things as healthy pregnancy and birth, parenting and family support, early childhood learning and care, and community support.

### **Environmental Health: Creating healthy environments**

Environmental health is about creating and maintaining environments which promote good public health. It involves those aspects of human health and disease that are determined by physical, chemical, and biological factors in the environment, such as contaminants in food, air, soil and water.

### **Evaluation**

Evaluation is on-going to monitor the progress and measure the impact of actions taken to support and implement the Wellness Plan. Indicators have been identified; however, other indicators will need to be developed as the plan progresses.

**The following two (2) areas remain priorities, however, the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council retains a supportive, rather than an active role:**

**Tobacco Control: Reducing smoking rates and exposure to second-hand smoke**

There has been substantial progress made in this priority area and leadership now rests with the Alliance for Control of Tobacco (ACT). Efforts in tobacco control have seen a decrease in the smoking rates in the province. While this is good news, we must continue to prevent children and youth from starting to smoke, encourage and support people to quit smoking and protect Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans from second-hand smoke. These efforts will positively impact the health and well being of people.

**Health Protection: Protecting the health of the public**

The Provincial Wellness Advisory Council awaits the outcome of work being done by the Public Health Advisory Committee before initiating further activity in the area of health protection. Health protection focuses on protecting communities and individuals from epidemics and communicable disease, and prepares them for natural or man-made disasters and public health emergencies. Actions will include:

- ✓ raising awareness of the increased health risks of particular lifestyle choices,
- ✓ supporting at-risk groups in protecting themselves from particular disease agents, and
- ✓ engaging individuals and communities in emergency preparedness activities.

**Wellness is a state of emotional, mental, physical, social and spiritual well-being that enables people to reach and maintain their optimal level of health**

## Budget

The Council does not maintain a separate office; support and secretariat services are provided by the Health Promotion and Wellness Division, 1st floor West Block, Confederation Building, St. John's.

The Wellness Council meets every 3 months. Member organizations contribute to the costs of participating in activities and meetings. Council expenses, such as meeting costs and when necessary, travel for members to attend meetings, are covered by the Department as approved by the Minister of Health and Community Services through the budget process. The yearly expenditures are approximately \$10,000.

## Committee Membership

The Provincial Wellness Advisory Council is a 27 member group representing non-government agencies, professional associations and various government departments. Membership is voluntary and appointments are made by the Minister of Health and Community Services. The membership as of April 1, 2011 can be found in Appendix B.

## Vision

The Provincial Wellness Advisory Council supports the following vision and values of the Department of Health and Community Services:

***The vision of the Department of Health and Community Services is for individuals, families and communities to achieve optimal health and well being.***

The Provincial Wellness Advisory Council contributes to achieving this vision by providing advice and guidance in the development of priorities for the wellness plan, ongoing review and assessment of progress, and collaboration among partners at the provincial and regional level.

## Values

The Department of Health and Community Services' values are reflected daily as employees fulfill their roles and responsibilities in serving their clients. The Provincial Wellness Advisory Council supports the following departmental values:

### ***Professionalism***

Each person is qualified and competent, and supported in their work through a culture that encourages continuing education and employee development.

### ***Excellence***

Each person makes decisions based on the best evidence available and follows proven best practices to ensure individual and departmental performance is maintained at the highest possible standard.

### ***Transparency and Accountability***

Each person takes their responsibilities to their clients seriously and contributes to a culture of openness and transparency in decision-making and reporting.

### ***Collaboration***

Each person engages others, both within and external to the department, in a positive manner, respectful of others and their different perspectives.

### ***Privacy***

Each person manages and protects information related to persons/families/Organizations/communities and the department appropriately.

## Primary Client

The Provincial Wellness Advisory Council recognizes the Minister of Health and Community Services, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador as its primary client. By fostering an environment of understanding within government about wellness the communities, organizations and the people of the province are also served.

### 3. Mission 2017

The Provincial Wellness Advisory Council has adopted the mission of the Department of Health and Community Services' Strategic Plan 2011-2017 as follows:

***By March 31, 2017 the Department of Health and Community Services will have provided leadership to support an enhanced health care system that effectively serves the people of the province and helps them achieve optimal health and well-being.***

The PWAC contributes to the above mission statement through its key directions, wellness priorities and the collaborative efforts that are made individually and collectively by member organizations to further wellness policies and initiatives within the Province. The Advisory Council shares the same vision and supports the mission of the Department. The performance indicators that accompany the Department's mission relate to leadership support and implementation, which are separate and distinct from the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council, which has an advisory capacity to the Minister.

Note: For a complete version of the Department's strategic plan and mission statement, please contact the Department of Health and Community Services Tel: 709-729-4984 or email: [healthinfo@gov.nl.ca](mailto:healthinfo@gov.nl.ca) or visit <http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/> .

## 4. Goals and Objectives

### **Issue 1: Addressing Identified and Emerging Wellness Issues**

The evaluation of Phase 1 of the Provincial Wellness Plan (2009) provided evidence to support sustaining or modifying existing policies, programs and/or resources and develop new initiatives. The Provincial Wellness Advisory Council has reviewed its original recommendations to assess what had been achieved, what was still relevant and required work and what new areas of health promotion and wellness required attention. In this review the Council identified significant achievements over the last 10 years including: new resources, new policies and programs particularly in the area of school health, healthy eating, physical activity, tobacco control and the environment. The Regional Wellness Coalitions have had significant achievements. It also identified that considerable work was still required if the PWAC hoped to make substantial improvements in health and wellness in the province by continuing to work on existing priorities and identifying emerging wellness issues. These issues and recommendations are presented to the Department and Minister of Health and Community Services for consideration in keeping with the strategic direction of “Population Health” and “Accountability of Health and Community Services”. Through such means, the PWAC contributes to improvements in the policies, programs and services that impact the overall health of the population.

**Goal:** By March 31, 2014, the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council will have continued making recommendations on issues that impact the health and well being of Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans.

**Measure:** Continued making recommendations

**Indicators:**

- Obtained the expertise of Council members to identify emerging issues
- Completed environmental scans to determine policy relevance
- Established working groups as necessary
- Presented position papers to the Minister of Health and Community Services

**Annual Objectives:**

By March 31, 2012, 2013, and 2014, the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council will have provided commentary and recommendations on addressing priority wellness issues to the Department and Minister of Health and Community Services.

**Measure:** Provided commentary and recommendations

**Indicators:**

- Obtained expert and member group opinions
- Assessed resource capacity to develop issues
- Reviewed available health status information on emerging issues
- Reached consensus on issue to be addressed
- Prioritized identified/ emerging issues
- Developed working or policy papers

## **Issue 2: Monitoring and Surveillance**

The Provincial Wellness Advisory Council has monitoring the achievements of the wellness plan as part of its mandate. The subject matter of its efforts, the wellness of Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans and the communities we live in, makes monitoring and surveillance a challenge. The results of this work are longitudinal and will take many years to realize. Even then, stating that a reduction in unhealthy behaviours or an increase in healthy behaviour was attributable to a specific action may not be possible because of a multitude of confounding variables that exist in the social and physical environment. However, through the establishment of national and provincial and regional health status indicators, assessing changes and progress is possible. Such information is sought after and constitutes the evidence that inform policy and decision making to affect the future. This activity supports the strategic direction of accountability and stability of health services and the outcome of improved system performance and sustainability.

**Goal:** By March 31, 2014, Provincial Wellness Advisory Council will have monitored available information in a manner that provides evidence to inform wellness related policy and legislation.

**Measure:** Monitored available information

### **Indicators:**

- Advised the department on the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data related to existing wellness priority areas
- Improved the coordination of data collection and analysis related to existing indicators managed by council members
- Engaged the university and academic research community to discuss increased capacity

## **Annual Objectives**

By March 31, 2012, the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council will have focused Council's efforts to improve access to data related to monitoring existing wellness priority areas.

**Measure:** Focused Council's efforts to improve access to data

**Indicators:**

- Assessed the involvement of Council members in collection and dissemination of data
- Identified Council members and community groups with an interest in improving research and performance measurement
- Determined if standardized data collection tools are available
- Determined if a mechanism exists in the department to provide access to relevant data

By March 31, 2013, the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council will have agreed upon a minimum set of health indicators for monitoring existing and emerging wellness issues.

By March 31, 2014, the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council will have achieved increased capacity in monitoring through partnership and collaboration.

### **Issue 3: The Supportive Environment**

There is substantial evidence that having a supportive environment is critical to individuals achieving health. This includes communities that support people to be physically active, to have access to safe, nutritious, affordable food; and to be socially connected. People are healthier when they live in neighborhoods or communities where they can walk or bike to work, school or grocery store and where there is a strong sense of community. Strategies in health promotion and health education, skills building, and community mobilization are essential in creating supportive environments. Their impact will be furthered by policies that support healthy living and may take a generation to achieve. The strategic direction of “Population Health” and the focus areas of environmental health and wellness are addressed as the Council starts a discussion to define and understand the issue of “supportive environment”.

#### **Goal:**

By March 31, 2014, the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council will have promoted the concept of the supportive environment with respect to its impact on the health of the population.

**Measure:** Promoted the concept of the supportive environment

#### **Indicators:**

- Applied the wellness framework/ perspective to policy and programs relating to the supportive environment
- Made recommendations regarding resources on health literacy
- Identified target audiences and key messages
- Strengthened existing partnerships to address this issue
- Engaged new partners to address this issue

**Annual Objectives:**

By March 31, 2012, the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council will have established a common understanding of this issue and related policy issues in relation to health literacy among member organizations.

**Measure:** Established a common understanding

**Indicators:**

- Developed a baseline to determine the existing level of understanding on this wellness issue within the Council
- Identified key messages related to the impact of this issue on wellness and healthy environments
- Assessed ways of introducing a health literacy program
- Submitted recommendations to the Department on ways to introduce a health literacy program

By March 31, 2013, the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council will have broadened the scope of this issue, the supportive environment, to identify legislative and policy areas that require review.

By March 31, 2014, the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council will have assessed the progress of initiatives undertaken to promote the concept of supportive environment.

## **APPENDIX A: STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS**

### **Title: Population Health**

### **Outcome: Improved Population Health**

To achieve “improved population health”, focusing efforts on public health interventions that will; promote healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities, prevent acute and chronic illness and injury, and protect people from health hazards, are necessary.

An integrated and collaborative approach, which preserves and promotes health and prevents and controls disease, is needed to:

- reduce the incidence of many of the illnesses that currently contribute to the burden of illness in Newfoundland and Labrador; and
- prepare the health system for illnesses and threats to health that are expected to emerge as society and the physical environment change.

Activities in these areas will decrease the burden of illness and associated health care and treatment costs, and contribute significantly to a sustainable health system. Focus areas for 2011-2014 are found on the next page. Some are population specific and others are related to health initiatives or programs to improve population health.

Focus Areas of the Strategic Direction 2011-2017	The Population Health Strategic Direction is		
	Addressed by The PWAC		
	Activity Plan	Operational plan	Work Plan
Environmental Health	√		
Health Emergency Management			
Healthy Aging	√		
Healthy Eating/ Physical Activity	√		
Injury Prevention	√		
Maternal/Newborn Health	√		
Smoking Rates And Protection from Environmental Smoke	√		
Wellness	√		

**Title: Accountability and stability of health and community services**

**Outcome: Improved system performance and sustainability**

Health is a priority of Government, such that record investments have been made for several consecutive years. In 2010-2011, health and community services consumed approximately 37 % of all government expenditures with the largest percentage allocated to regional health services (70 %). The ability to sustain the provision of quality services requires the coordination and integration of services, increased standardization and monitoring of clinical practice and service, and innovation. A focus on increased monitoring and evaluation, the achievement of balanced budgets, the stabilization of health human resources and increased utilization of information for evidence based practice will lead to a more sustainable health system and contribute to improved health outcomes for the people of the Province.

Focus Areas of the Strategic Direction 2011-2017	The Strategic Direction of Improved Accountability and Stability in the Delivery of Health and Community Services within Available Resources,		
	Is Addressed by The PWAC		
	Activity Plan	Operational Plan	Work Plan
Evaluation of Legislation, Programs and Services	√		
Health Research	√		
Information Management and Technology	√		
Performance Measurement/ Monitoring	√		

## **APPENDIX B: COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP (April 1, 2011)**

Chairperson: Dr. Catherine Donovan, Memorial University of Newfoundland  
Faculty of Medicine

- Association of Allied Health Professionals -Carla Butt
- Alliance for the Control of Tobacco -Kevin Coady
- Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador -Lynn Power
- Canadian Cancer Society of Newfoundland and Labrador -Matthew Piercey
- Canadian Diabetes Association of Newfoundland and Labrador -Carol Ann Smith
- Canadian Mental Health Association -George Skinner
- Department of Education -Ellen Coady & Bradley Clarke
- Department of Environment and Conservation -Angela Burridge
- Department of Government Services -Donna Kelland
- Department of Health and Community Services -Keith Hutchings, Darryl Johnson, Wanda Legge, Troy Mitchell, Keith Dyer & Tracy King
- Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment -Ed Moriarity & Donna O'Brien
- Department of Municipal Affairs -Rick Healey
- Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation -Mark Jones & Jim Tee
- Dietitians Association of Newfoundland and Labrador -Marg Ewtushik
- Heart and Stroke Association of Newfoundland and Labrador -Heather Percy
- Lung Association of Newfoundland and Labrador -Greg Noel
- Memorial University of Newfoundland Faculty of Medicine -Pauline Duke
- Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Municipalities -Leo Abbass
- Newfoundland and Labrador Health Boards Association -Natalie Moody
- Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association -Jonathan Carpenter
- Newfoundland and Labrador Parks and Recreation Association -Sean McKenna
- Newfoundland and Labrador Public Health Association -Fay Matthews
- Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association –Wayne Noseworthy
- Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association -Claudette Coombs
- Regional Integrated Health Authorities
- Rural Secretariat -Michelle Snow
- Seniors Resource Centre Association of Newfoundland and Labrador -Kelly Heisz

### **Contact Information**

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